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Lake Forest High School in Lake Forest, Illinois, has developed a program for introducing Portuguese in the secondary school. The program is now in its sixth successive, successful year. Instead of being included in the curriculum as a full-time course, Portuguese falls in the category of an "enrichment course." It is abbreviated (the first year students meet three times a week; the second year, twice a week) and made available to those students able and desiring to go beyond the usual college preparatory curriculum. Students must have completed one year of high school Spanish with at least an average grade. Since the course is taught through Spanish in the comparative method, the student continues his study of Spanish while acquiring new skills. In addition to describing the program, this paper discusses some of the problems standing in the way of a full-scale Portuguese program: (1) space in the crowded curriculum, (2) availability of qualified staff, (3) lack of variety and range of teaching materials, (4) anxieties of curriculum planners, (5) budgetary considerations, (6) competition with established language programs, (7) lack of convictions strong enough to support a full program, and (8) lack of university programs for program continuity. (DO)

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WAYS AND MEANS OF INTRODUCING PORTUGUESE TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

by Joseph P. Lawlor

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This paper will present briefly the Lake Forest program for introducing Portuguese to the Secondary school; a program now in its sixth successive successful year. I offer it as an example which has worked and which has gained firm support in our school system.

I am going to begin here with the assumption that the administrator is already convinced that Portuguese would be a desirable offering, but he must now be advised regarding the details of its incorporation and he must be given some clear, strong features of such a program for his presentation to the board of education and to the community at large.

But first, let's back off a bit. Obviously, school entities are similarly unique, and so interpolations are requisite. There are many schools where Portuguese, I can safely say, will never be offered. Even the casual observer understands that we cannot suggest that school officials are per se remiss if Portuguese is not in their curriculum. We must first

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consider the times and the places. We are concerned for now with introducing; starting programs in the individual educational systems where they can best take root because of the soil, the climate, the season and the means to cultivate.

Full-scale language programs for Portuguese in the secondary school is a goal, but it is a rather distant one. It is conceivable that in a large school system a full 2, 3, or 4 year program could be launched all at once. But there are a number of problems standing in the way:

space in the crowded curriculum,

availability of qualified staff for years 1 and 2 (years 3 and 4 are out of sight),

lack of variety and range of well-developed teaching materials, aids, etc., for a full program, (This is getting more and more attention recently.)

anxieties of school curriculum planners because of rapidly changing procedures in the academic world,

tendency for schools to have a more difficult time in the immediate future in the financing of education programs because of the rising tax load on local communities,

competition with established 2, 3, and 4 year programs in other languages,

lack of convictions strong enough to support a full program, and

in general, current lack of enough strong university programs ready to articulate, that is, to justify the secondary school effort because there is a continuity leading to advanced work.

Put another way, we have to be resourceful even under the best conditions.

Here, then, are the ways and means of our program in a suburban school in Lake Forest, Illinois.[1] When the program started in 1962, the total school enrollment was around 1000; today we are nearly 1600. We offer five years of French, four of Spanish, four of German, four of Latin, an introduction to Greek and two courses of Portuguese. Foreign language study is not required, but from 75 to 80 percent of those enrolled take one or more languages in addition to English. Some of our procedures may be useful elsewhere.

How to overcome:

1. SPACE IN THE CROWDED CURRICULUM.

The first problem for a student after he has become interested in learning Portuguese is to find a way to work it into a loaded schedule and the instructor is likely to have a similar problem. Do I have to give up another class to do it? Can I keep up with my work load if this course is added? Can I justify taking on this extra course in terms of my whole academic program?

The administrative problems of working out a feasible space in the schedule and a classroom are also basic.

We did some compromising on the face of it and adjusted things to come up with the following:

The Portuguese offering was to be in the category of an "enrichment course," that is, abbreviated and made available to those students able and desiring to go beyond the usual college preparatory program. Such courses are offered for a semester or for a year, but because this course involves a language skill, it should really extend over two years as a minimum. To be brief, we decided to offer the first course for three days per

week and the second course for two days per week; study time for off days. This may appear too much compromise, but we compensated for this short scheduling by opening the course only to students who had completed two years of Spanish Regular or one year of Spanish Honors; later it was made available to students who have completed one year of regular Spanish with at least an average grade.

This means that the course can be and is taught through Spanish in the comparative method. The student of Spanish is fluent enough to use it as the language of communication and reference. It is very significant that he is uniquely continuing his study of Spanish as well as acquiring new skills. Phonological emphasis is also given with the comparative approach. At the Conference on High School Portuguese held at Vanderbilt University in June of 1967, Professors Ernesto Da Cal, Earl Thomas and others spoke favoring emphasis on comparison and phonology in method of instruction. Then, of course, the target language Portuguese is used increasingly to replace Spanish in class discourse.

So, by starting with students of Spanish and by the methods of instruction used, we are able to compensate for the restrictions of the curriculum.

For the past five years, the total number of students in both courses has averaged fifteen students, ample to justify the offering at our school. Nevertheless, an annual recruiting effort is made by myself and my Spanish staff to sell the Portuguese course, and make special recommendations.[2]

As for the teacher's load and schedule, mine in this case, the arrangement described above works out fine, one hour per day for Portuguese. There are two preparations involved.

The one hour per day can be managed fairly well by those charged with

preparing the schedule and feeding the computer. Very few students find that they cannot take Portuguese because of scheduling limitations. The larger the school becomes the easier this goes.

2. AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED STAFF.

This is a "chicken or the egg primacy." As we continue with a chicken cycle analogy, this paper deals with the incubator and hatchery phase of a rare bird farm. Many of the teachers of Portuguese today are Spanish specialists who have somehow prepared themselves in Portuguese and who have a missionary urge about it, like myself. If a school has such a bird, then it can get on with program planning. The alternative is to hire one of the recent young graduates who can teach both languages; still hard to find in 1968.

I believe that most educators would agree that for such a program we need first an able teacher who can instruct Portuguese; not merely a fluent person. Because rarely could the latter make such a program survive. Staff stability is another consideration. If your instructor leaves, the program may have to go also. We must be looking for persons to sell, to cultivate a program on the terms of the situation, to teach some form of a two-year program at this juncture. Really advanced work will remain, generally, in the universities for a while. Some able and experienced teachers may acquire enough from good summer NDEA Institutes to qualify themselves to launch a secondary school program. If help is needed in this respect, I recommend contact with the faculty of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Vanderbilt University.

3. LACK OF VARIETY AND RANGE OF TEACHING MATERIALS.

Given the type of program I have described, you may sense the need for flexible, viable teaching materials. In our program, for the first year, I have adapted traditional grammars and readers of old vintage (from the 1940's), and I have supplemented much more, including tapes of reading lessons, pattern sentences, radio programs, etc.

For the second year I have used some more recent materials in modern Brazilian novels, plays and short stories. Perhaps the most useful second year text is O teatro brasileiro contemporâneo (Martins and Menton); but even here modern instruction, at least on the secondary level, would require tapes of these dramas by professional Brazilian theatrical companies. (I am currently searching for such recordings.)

In general, the materials recently authored for beginning Portuguese courses assume a rather structured, traditional method and a full-time schedule for students starting from English to the target language. So such material is not feasible for an introductory secondary school program like the one I am now describing. Resourcefulness is demanded in developing and selecting materials suitable. Here is a list of most of the materials from which I am currently drawing for our Portuguese courses.[3]

4. ANXIETIES OF CURRICULUM PLANNERS.

One may encounter considerable resistance to the addition of another language to a curriculum because, in the first place, modern language instruction has come to occupy a larger part of the total offering than ever before and, in the second place, there are great pressures to change the school structure in general, so that a specific alteration to include Portuguese will probably bring about a reactionary response. A modified

introductory program such as the one I have described will surely appear more attractive to those who must ultimately decide whether to offer Portuguese or not. In other words, the risk is smaller to them.

5. BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS.

The tax load on local school districts now is growing so rapidly that all of us in public school districts have become very aware of the local community's unwillingness to pay the rising costs. And the education tax is one that the citizen can easily vote down. This means we have a more difficult and delicate problem of selling, especially for the administrator. Once the economies of our modified program have been explained in terms of very significant returns to the student and therefore to the school for the small investment of space in the curriculum and staff time, the probability of offering the program is indeed greater. Put another way, Portuguese would enhance the curriculum and since it doesn't cost much to include it, why not?

6. COMPETITION WITH ESTABLISHED LANGUAGE PROGRAMS.

Our modified program at Lake Forest does not really cut into any other territory. In particular, it does not cut into the other languages of our department. In the first place, it is open only to students more or less fluent in Spanish which includes transfer students from Spanish speaking countries. Second, these students do not take it instead of another language or instead of continuing in Spanish. They take it to add on another language, usually in place of a study hour, which they sacrifice. It is supplementary, therefore, to their academic program.

A few students have, through a FLES program (Foreign Languages in

Elementary Schools) or from foreign residence accelerated to complete, say the four year Spanish course before their senior year and they wish to continue a contact with Spanish. Portuguese class is the place for them to go to use Spanish, reinforce it and acquire new skills concomitantly. Thus, you see, no fears need arise, under this plan, that the Portuguese course would throw the other programs out of balance.

7. LACK OF CONVICTIONS STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A FULL PROGRAM.

Don't ask for a full program. As things are, it would very likely end in a false start anyhow. The one full year taught in two courses over a two year space, or the two-year program telescoped into one schedule hour, however you wish to look at it, with emphasis on the comparative approach and made a pleasant rewarding experience, is the most pragmatic and viable program for most schools which would consider it in the first place. The objectives with priority are: to generate interest and to teach basic skills, so that the students can and will want to continue in the university.

8. LACK OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FOR PROGRAM CONTINUITY.

The universities are making great efforts and much progress to provide programs in Portuguese instruction. While at present many may not be all one could desire, perhaps little more could honestly be expected under the circumstances. Quality programs in universities depend on what is being done in the secondary schools, just as we depend on the product of the grade school for what we are able to do. This is the point of our "hatchery type" program at Lake Forest. We are breaking the vicious circle of no program of instruction because there are no teachers because there are no students because there are no teachers, etc.

EPILOGUE

The learning of the Portuguese language, the study and appreciation of the Luso-Brazilian cultures must be sold with the interest and courage and resourcefulness of Prince Henry. The sailors have to savor the voyage and get somewhere, or further exploration will be discontinued.

Joseph P. Lawlor

August 1968

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Footnotes:

1 Refer to March 1968 Illinois Journal of Education, pages 35-39, A SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR PORTUGUESE, by Joseph P. Lawlor.

2 Lake Forest High School circular to students of Spanish, parents, and Guidance Counselors, Subject: PortugueseI and II.

3 List of Printed and Taped Materials for Portuguese I and II, Lake Forest High School.

LAKE FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
Lake Forest, Illinois

To: Students of Spanish, Parents, and Guidance Counselors

From: Modern Language Department

SUBJECT: Portuguese I and II (each 1/2 credit)

1. May be taken for one year (Portuguese I) three days a week and may be continued a second year (Portuguese II) two days a week.

2. This is an enrichment course open only to students of Spanish who have completed the prerequisite courses in Spanish with at least an average grade (or special recommendation): Spanish I regular or above.

3. The base or contact language is Spanish leading to the target language Portuguese. That is to say that Spanish, not English, is the language of reference.

4. Because of the preparation of the students in a language of the same family, achievement is far beyond what one would perhaps expect for the time and effort invested.

5. This course can be worked into a regular program without putting a strain upon it.

6. Today's generation will be the first in our nations to really experience a need for Portuguese, not only because it is one of the world's principal languages (now well over 120 million speakers) but also because of the rapidly rising political, cultural, and economic importance of Brazil (over 80 million) in this hemisphere. This generation will have to deal intimately with Brazilians. Great is the need for educated North Americans who can communicate with them in their own language and understand them in their way of life. Thus we are not over-emphasizing by this effort to teach Portuguese at Lake Forest High School.

7. This is the first course in our school in which the language of departure is a second language.

8. The study of Portuguese in American universities is increasing more than any other language. Therefore, it is more likely each year that the student of Portuguese will find opportunity to continue his preparation in university courses.

9. Lake Forest High School has graduates studying Portuguese now, as a result of their studies here.

10. If there are further questions about this course, please refer them to Mr. Joseph Lawlor, Portuguese instructor, who will be pleased to talk with you about them.

LAKE FOREST HIGH SCHOOL
Lake Forest, Illinois

PRINTED AND TAPED MATERIALS FOR

PORTUGUESE I AND II

Course I

Introduction to Portuguese Grammar (Williams) F. S. Crofts.

Contos e anecdotas brasileiros (H. H. Carter) D. C. Heath.

Supplementary:

Brazilian Portuguese (University of Wisconsin) Pattern sentences, with tapes.

First Portuguese Reader (Scanlon and Cilly) Oxford University Press. With tapes.

Course II

O teatro brasileiro contemporâneo (Martins and Menton) Appleton-Century-Crofts. Tapes to be prepared.

Contos brasileiros (Hamilton and Fahs) Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Supplementary:

Artigos e contos portugueses. F. S. Crofts. With tapes. Formerly used as a "reader" and now used on occasion for independent work.

Spoken Portuguese. (Kany and Pinheiro) D. C. Heath. Pattern sentences.